

The PGA Tournament Play Completes as Lively's Restoration Ramps UP

Golf Course Superintendents are all about control. Controlling the staff, the growth of plants, and, when possible, the environment. I think that many of us like the feeling of being able to change the playability of a piece of land. You tend to that piece of land. You know that piece of land better than anyone else. It becomes a part of you.



Tom Lively, CGCS on his nightly tour of the course.



A fairway prepped for sod. During the tournament it was a parking lot.



The big rolls of sod staged and set to go down.

This is part two in my look at Medinah Country Club hosting the 88th PGA Championship. Let me set the stage for you. It is two days before the golf world descends upon your course for the PGA Championship. You have done everything just as the PGA officials have asked. The rough is tough, the fairways are free of divots and the greens are rolling over 12 feet on the Stimp-meter. Medinah No. 3 is tournament ready.

"I don't want you to cut the greens for a couple days," is the comment from PGA officials.

Let us think about this for a second. It has taken double mowing and rolling to get the greens in the condition they are in. The greens show no stress and the Superintendent has an impeccable record for conditions and good judgment when it comes to the maintenance of his courses. Why would a wrench be thrown into his plan?

Beyond this, second-guessing the PGA of America will not happen in this article. The PGA has a lot more experience than any of us at running top-notch golf events, besides, they were paying the bill.

Tom Lively, CGCS at Medinah Country Club did a fantastic job preparing the course for the 88th PGA Championship. It looked perfect in every way. The course caught a lot of heat in the media for being too easy to play a Major on. What doesn't get communicated is that the course was set up exactly as the PGA wanted it. The playing conditions could not have been better. There was talk of the greens being too soft. This was not the case, unless the sand based greens could get saturated with a two-minute hand watering to cool the turf. That is all the irrigation the greens received for the week, a two-minute hand watering on Monday and Tuesday. It did rain an inch on the Friday of the tournament, and this could not be controlled, but on Saturday the greens were actually rolling faster than the previous day.

You may remember my first article about preparations for the event. There was a great deal of turf carnage leading up to the event. Areas of the other two courses at Medinah CC had to be 'sacrificed' to prepare for the event.

Look back at my first article for the whole run-down of what was done in the years and months leading up to this event. Also note what had to be done in the weeks and days leading up to the event. The PGA set-up began in

(continued on page 13)

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earnest eight weeks before the tournament, which was hosted the week of August 14th – 20th. Here are some of the highlights of that two-month stretch. Parking lots, driveways, and tent villages were built on areas of Courses No.1 and No. 2. In some areas, this involved hauling in gravel and in others it meant paving areas that had been fairways. Decking was constructed over fairways for tents to sit on. Almost 1000 cubic yards of mulch was brought in, along with thousands of dollars worth of annual plants to dress up the new traffic pattern that would be used for the tournament. Corporate ‘Villas’ and bleachers were constructed on Course No. 3. Finally the fairway divots in landing areas had to be repaired. Not filled in, but repaired. The Medinah CC staff used one of the tees that was taken out of play for harvesting bentgrass swaths. These pieces of turf were then used to fill in the divots.

For the week of the PGA, the Medinah staff was joined by 55 volunteers on the grounds crew. Many MAGCS members volunteered for this duty. These dedicated Superintendents, Assistants, and Interns made things run smoothly. The 80 grounds staff members, along with the volunteers, were able to get the course prepared for play in one hour and 15 minutes each morning: On the course at 5:45 a.m., and off by 7:00 a.m., just like clockwork. This included mowing everything but the rough, which was fluffed. With the assistance of TPEC and Nadler Golf Car Sales, Medinah CC was able to supply the workers with 45 Toro Walking Greens mowers, 14 Toro 3250s to mow fairways and 15 Club Car Carry All IIs. Toro also helped out with 10 additional Workman utility vehicles. A small evening crew came in to mow greens, fill divots, and perform other tasks that could be done in the evening. Tom would like to thank all the volunteers for making his life much easier. Because of their help he didn’t have any great catastrophe stories to share about the week.

The real fun began for Tom once the tournament was over. The course needed to be repaired, but the members needed to play their traditional late summer events. It took 4

The 80 grounds staff members, along with the volunteers, were able to get the course prepared for play in one hour and 15 minutes each morning.

weeks to remove all of the temporary tents and buildings from Course No. 3 and surrounding areas. Contractors began removal of parking lots and stone as well.

The good news is that Course No. 3 is in fantastic shape as of October 9th. Some limited sodding will be needed to make things perfect, but seeding was conducted in high traffic areas immediately after the event. I expected mass devastation on my return trip. There was none. I could not discern where the grandstands had sat or where the traffic had crossed over fairways. The course looks great! There are two or three areas left in disrepair from ‘Villas’ or traffic from the trucks used to remove the grandstands, but these areas are out of play. The rough has been returned to a 2.5” mowing height from its tournament ending 8”!!! This was a lengthy process in itself, heights having to be dropped to 5.5, 4.5, and 3.5” in before finally being returned to the preferred height of cut.

The bad news is that course No. 1 and 2 still have a long way to go before they are ready to play. Mother nature has slowed the repair process. Fall rain has made it difficult to work on damaged areas and prep the ground for extensive reconstruction in the highly damaged areas. Beyond that, the sod that needed to be shipped in couldn’t be harvested due to the same rains. Of all the things

(continued on page 14)



A customized installer for bigroll bentgrass sod.



Above and below: Installation of the bigroll sod still has to be finished by hand.



The rough fluffing crew out at night around a green complex.



Filling divots in the evening after play had stopped.



Early in the week, giving the turf a quick drink.



A look down the row of corporate Villas that wound their way around the grounds.



A tee on course two that became a source of plugs for divots.

that we try and control nature is the most difficult. Pennncross Creeping bentgrass sod has been laid on the 11th fairway of Course No. 1 where the PGA Media Tent was resident. Pennncross and L-93 sod and seed will be used to resurface the fairways and tees on Course No.1 and No. 2. The 11th hole is seeing a bunker reconstruction. The 12th fairway of the same course was reseeded and covered with greens covers to speed establishment. Rough areas on this hole have been re-sodded with Kentucky bluegrass. In total, six fairways on Course No. 2 needed to be repaired extensively after the crowds left. As an example, the 18th fairway was 70% dead at the end of the tournament.

It is not known when the back nine of Course No. 1 will be open for normal membership play, but Tom hopes that it will be playable by the end of April 2007, weather providing. What is visible though, is that progress is being made by the contractors on site. The sod from Central Sod Farm is being installed at a rapid rate and a crew from Bird

"...the 18th fairway was 70% dead at the end of the tournament."

Construction is quickly removing gravel from topsoil where temporary parking lots once sat. Asked if he would do it again Tom answered, "Yes," and adds that he will have the chance in 2012 when the Ryder Cup comes to town. Believe it or not, the Ryder Cup is an even bigger event.



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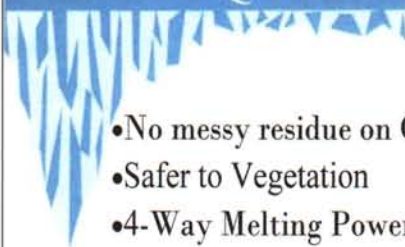
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Get Technical with TETA at the IPTC


In the midst of falling leaves, football, and the preparations for winter tear downs, it's time to identify the things for which we are thankful. 'Tis the season for reflection on what we have and cherish. Some of us will be thankful for a great golf season coming to an end. Others may be thankful it's finally over. I'm thankful to have a job. Many big businesses continue to make changes that cost employees their jobs. It seems as if every year more and more occurrences of this type happen just before the holidays.

I have written before on the topic of job security, but addressing only the lighter side of the issue. Machines breaking down, repeated grinding rituals due to top dressing, and fertilizing ever-growing turf keeps a technician busy and content. We should remember the other reason we continue to retain a position at a golf course. Our positions are only as secure as the patrons who pay the membership dues and spend money on rounds of golf, lessons, the driving range, and in the pro shop. Fortunately with another successful season under our belts, we know that the support of the customer is still with us.

We need to look forward and continue to strive for the perfection that is expected next season and in the years to come. The IPTC offers the golf course equipment Technician/Manager many opportunities this year. I have attended many educational seminars in the past when the conference was called the NCTE. Since being a part of TETA, I have enjoyed attending and contributing to sessions that are aimed at the Equipment Technician. We've had tremendous support from manufacturers, our local distributors, and especially their service teams.

TETA has also presented sessions that were produced for Technicians by Technicians. This year we will have an in-depth reel technology session. This is an all-day event not to be missed. It is offered on Tuesday November 28th. When a Technician attends this session he or she will be educated on every aspect of the reel cutting unit. Various designs of cutting units, inspections, maintenance, adjustments, overhaul, grinding, and more will be addressed. This will be a very informal session that invites input and discussion from everyone. Afterwards attendees will have the opportunity to take the Reel Certification exam.

On Wednesday, November 29th, among the many attractions on the trade show floor, the IPTC education committee proudly presents the Solution Centers. One Solution Center will have representatives from TETA. We will be present so you can stop by and check out some of the daily tasks that are in store for the technician. We will have special equipment, tools, and "gizmos" that other technicians have made in order to make certain tasks easier. We will have demonstrations on the proper procedures in squaring up a cutting unit. The hit-list of causes for variances in quality-of-cut will be shown with visual demonstrations. We will also have a general session in a salon titled "TETA Round Table Discussion." Its purpose is to share shop tips of all kinds. This should be valuable for all equipment technicians and managers. So much can be learned by sharing experiences with others. If you can walk away with just one idea—if not many—to take back to the shop, it's worth the trip to the IPTC.

I look forward to seeing you there. Until then I wish you all a safe and special Thanksgiving. 

the Bull Sheet

John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor

DATES TO REMEMBER

November 1 – 54th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club in Medinah, IL, **Tom Lively, CGCS** host.

November 9 – Chicagoland Association of Golf Course Superintendents' 22nd Annual Forum at Naperville Country Club, **Tim Anderson, CGCS** host.

November 18 – Annual MAGCS Fall Dinner Dance at Ruth Lake Country Club in Hinsdale, IL, **Bridget and Dan Marco, CGCS** hosts.

November 27 – **Northwestern Illinois GCSA and GCSAA Education** present "Cutting Edge Disease Identification & Management" full-day seminar at the Ramada Inn on 200 South Bell Road in Rockford, IL. Call (800) 472-7878 to register or for more information.

November 28 – 30 – **Illinois Professional Turf Conference** at the Pheasant Run Resort

in St. Charles, IL. Visit illinoisturfgrassfoundation.org

December 11 – Annual West Side Holiday Party at Dave & Buster's in Addison, IL from 12 noon to 3:00 PM.

January 10 – MAGCS Chapter-Administered GCSAA seminar at Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL. The topic is "Taking Control of Your Grassy Weeds" and is presented by Dr. Fred Yelverton.

February 19 – 24 – GCSAA Education Conference in conjunction with the Golf Industry Show in Anaheim, CA (where the "answer" is).

February 22 – MAGCS Hospitality Suite Extravaganza at a spectacular venue to be named later from 6:00 to 10:00 PM. Note that this event has been changed to a one-night affair and has added an extra hour for that night. Hilton Anaheim – Pacific Ballroom D.

Perusing the "pubs:"

The September issue of *Golf Course Management* featured Dr. Tom Voigt's research article titled "Turf and Native Grasses for Naturalized Roughs" on pages 89 through 92. Anyone considering "going native" on their courses should look into Dr. Tom's work, as it has valuable suggestions for proper grass choice in un-mowed areas.

In October's GCM, a photo on page 60 which ran in this very "pub" several years back prominently shows our Harley-hounds **Ed Fischer, CGCS, Paul Bastron, CGCS, and Chad Ball, CGCS** in Key West, Florida during a trip from Orlando down through the Keys after the

Conference and Show in 1999. The article, by Terry Ostmeyer, highlights the many positive benefits that GCSAA members glean from participating in the golf championship before each conference, with a focus on the lasting friendships and bonds forged from participating in it.

There has also been a story floating around about a meteorite being found on a West suburban country club by its superintendent. Now that my 15 minutes of fame is over, I can attest to the veracity of that claim. The thing that wasn't explained—the untold story if you will—is what REALLY happened... In a nutshell, I was scouting, I saw a spot on the 14th green (looked like

a pee spot from a fox), I checked it out and found a pea-sized object embedded in the soil in the center of the burn spot. I dug it out, it looked funny (you know, funny odd, not funny like a clown), so I took it to the office and googled "meteorite" as that is what I assumed it was. It checked out, so I gave it to my wife who works at Aurora University who gave it to someone else who passed it along to some expert at Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (lotsa hip kids there) who decided to test it in front of his class, the press, and representatives from various other planets. The first test involved determining its magnetism by using—go figure—a big magnet to attract the thing. Unfortunately, it WAS a big magnet, the table upon which the rock was placed happened to be of a steel composition, and the professor doing the test was NOT what one would characterize as "muscular." You can pretty much imagine what transpired next—magnet hit table with much force, crushing meteorite in the process. So feeling that our meteorite was in capable hands, Aurora Country Club donated its remains to both Aurora University and IMSA for further research and destruction. There.

Make plans to attend the CAGCS 22nd Annual Forum at Naperville Country Club (Tim Anderson, CGCS) on the 9th (if you are not a member, you can go by schmoozing one into bringing you as a guest). The day's talks all focus on a centralized theme—"Planning, The Roadmap to Success!" A slate of respected industry experts mixed with a little local flavor will present their views and experiences in planning for a wide variety of things from big-time golf events to your future finances. There will be something for everyone at this year's rendition of the Forum—see you there.

GCSAA has announced its slate of candidates for the election in February at the Golf Industry Show in Anaheim. For president, Ricky D. Heine from The Golf Club Star Ranch in Austin, Texas. For vice president, David S. Downing II,

(continued on page 20)

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CGCS from Rivers Edge Golf Club in Shallotte, N.C. For secretary/treasurer, James R. Fitzroy, CGCS at Wallaston Recreational Facility/Presidents Golf Club in North Quincy, Mass., and Mark D. Kuhns, CGCS from Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, N.J. For director (electing 3) are Keith A. Ihms, CGCS at Country Club of Little Rock in Little Rock, Arkansas; John C. Miller, CGCS at the Golf Club at Yankee Trace in Centerville, Ohio; Robert M. Randquist, CGCS of Boca Rio Golf Club in Boca Raton, Florida; and Roger M. Ruff, CGCS at Mountain Dell Golf Course in Salt Lake City, Utah. Good luck, and may the best CGCS win.

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MAGCS welcomes **Kirkwood Community College** and **Danville Community College** to its impressive list of honorary members.
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This was passed along to me by **Mike Bavier**, CGCS (Inverness GC), and I thought it would be of interest (even though it is a sad, sad story that appeared in the *Daily Herald* newspaper). "A former St. Charles man accused of violating his parole on a reckless homicide conviction has been captured in Minnesota after a year on the lam. Richard Ruane was arrested on August 24 in Marshall, Minnesota... (and) has been a wanted man since August 25, 2005 when he failed to show in court on felony obstruction of justice and underage drinking charges... At the time of his arrest, Ruane was on parole for a crash that killed a groundskeeper at the Elgin Country Club. On June 30, 2001, Ruane was 16 and drunk when he ignored a stop sign at Randall and Bolcum Roads and crashed into Tod Hopphan, 37, of Aurora, who was on his way to work." The article goes on to talk about how this guy used court-ordered talks at victim impact panels to pick up girls, tested positive for alcohol during a work-release program, and ignored 2 years of substance abuse treatment. Let's all hope they keep him for a while this time, huh?

.....
As usual, late September through October were packed with quality

golf opportunities for our membership. Three of the more prominent ones were the MAGCS Annual Golf Championship held at Makray Memorial Golf Club (**Chris Blake** host), the 3rd Annual Wee One Foundation golf outing at Pine Hills Country Club in Sheboygan, WI (Rod Johnson, CGCS)—both on September 25th, and the MAGCS/ITF Annual College Championship hosted by **Tom Prichard** and **Ivanhoe Club** on October 2nd. Although attendance at all 3 was impossible, thanks to friends like **Sharon Riesenbeck**, **Brett Grams**, and **Paul Bastron**, a thorough accounting of each through the written word as well as the digital camera was made possible.

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The 3rd Annual Wee One Foundation Golf Outing

On a beautiful sunny day at Pine Hills Country Club in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, the Wee One Foundation held its 3rd annual golf outing (a fund-raising event to assist golf course management professionals or their dependents who incur overwhelming expenses due to medical hardship). The golf course was in spectacular condition as per usual, thanks to our host Rod Johnson, CGCS. For those of you who have not yet played in the Wee One outing, or at Pine Hills, keep the last Monday in September open next year. Pine Hills is truly one of the best Wisconsin has to offer. As in past years, the fourth hole bar and beer stand and the thirteenth hole taco and beer stand kept players nourished throughout the two-person, alternating shot format. Afterwards, there were a slew of great raffle prizes and awards to be doled out. **Paul Bastron** and **Brad Roose** took top honors, but the real winners were the families who will benefit from the funds raised in the event. Thanks to all of our devoted and generous sponsors, all of the players who supported the outing this year (including MAGCS which contributed a \$1,000 hole sponsorship), and all of the people who support the Foundation through memberships and charitable gifts, the Wee One Foundation will continue to help families in our industry in their

time of need. To learn more about Wee One, or to read a more thorough description of the day, go to www.weeone.org.



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The MAGCS Annual Championship

Just a few hours south of Sheboygan, Chris Blake and the staff at Makray Memorial Golf Club in Barrington, IL had their new baby all dressed up for Sunday dinner and a little golf to boot. I will start this with my own observation: This is one tough course! With winds swooping in from all directions, with undulations, peaks, valleys, knobs, water features, and even the occasional waterfall, and with greens that ran quick (and deadly), this was a very formidable test for the best golfers our association boasts.

(continued on page 22)